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SECURITY INFORMATION

COUNTRY: Union of South Africa

SUBJECT: "Report on South Africa"

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The attached "Report on South Africa" discusses the victory of Prime Minister D.F. Malan's Nationalist Party in the 15 April 1953 elections in the Union of South Africa. The author notes that the Nationalist Party received less than a majority of the votes cast, that to the South African the issue is not a matter of race but is instead a struggle between the ideologies of two white nations - English and Boer. The author then discusses the two new opposition parties - the Liberals and the Federal Union Party, the rift amongst the Nationalists, and concludes that despite the confusion and the dangers of civil strife, the English speaking South Africans is now facing the problem and in "mobilizing his forces behind his democratic faiths,...he cannot escape the need to hammer out a race policy based on Western civilization's concept of the worth of the individual. Otherwise he must move into the Nationalist camp...he is beginning to see that his survival in South Africa is knit as closely to enlightened race policy as the Nationalists Afrikaner's is allied to white supremacy."

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South Africa

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**P** RIME MINISTER D. F. Malan's smashing victory in South Africa's general election on April 15 means the likelihood of a long period of Nationalist Party government. About a million English-speaking South Africans are resigning themselves to playing a minor political role in their homeland, although it promises to be a militant rear-guard action against the Afrikanerization of the country.

The fact is that Dr. Malan's victory, which substantially increased his control of Parliament, was won on less than a majority of the votes cast. Robert Stimson, BBC correspondent, made this explanation: "In the general election more people voted against the Nationalists than for them. This was because South Africa has and has always had an electoral system that makes a country vote more valuable than a town vote. The founders of the Union thought it reasonable that there should be a weightage in favor of the sparsely populated Platoland constituencies. It is in the Plateland, or countryside, that the National Party has its most solid core of support, and this explains why the National Party, although it secured fewer than half the total number of votes, won a decisive victory in terms of parliamentary seats."

To the outside world it may seem obvious that the Union's most urgent problem is to create immediately a social pattern giving hope and a voice to the 10 million non-Europeans in the multiracial society. To South Africans, on the other hand, the crux of the political struggle lies between the two white nations and their ideologies. The Nationalist Afrikaner aim is to create South Africans in the Afrikaner National Socialist image, with the Afrikaner white, his language, and his flag paramount. The Opposition ideal is a South African nation in which the two nationalities — English and Boer — fuse.

In July, Parliament sat in joint session to determine whether or not 48,000 voting Coloreds of mixed blood should be taken off the common roll and given communal franchise with four representatives in Parliament. So it would appear that the struggle really centers on race policy.

But this semblance is more apparent than real. In South Africa's constitution the same clause that entrenches protection of the Coloreds' voting rights — which they have held for one hundred years — protects the equal status of the two European languages, English and Afrikaans. A threat to the Colored franchise is an equal threat to the status of English, and it is this indirect threat to the language which musters the greatest opposition to changing the Colored vote.

The Nationalists' majority of 29 in the lower house of Parliament is not enough to give them the two-thirds vote required by the Constitution on this particular issue. To pass their bill to segregate the Coloreds, the Nationalists will have to persuade 15 of the Opposition to go along.

As bait the Nationalists have proposed re-entrenching the status of English, but their promises carry little weight because of past Nationalist attempts to circumvent the Constitution and because of Nationalist determination to invalidate the testing right of the High Court of Appeal, South Africa's Supreme Court.

The Opposition has a great fear that, given a Parliament whose Acts could neither be limited by the Constitution nor tested by the courts, a Broederbond Republic, based on Boer white supremacy, might be put over. So for these reasons, more than through concern for Colored rights, a change in the Colored franchise by extraconstitutional means is opposed. As we go to press, the bill has failed of passage on two readings. A third reading is scheduled for August 19.

#### Natal's new party

Out of post-election soul-searching and the current constitutional crisis two new parties have been born since the Nationalist victory, each of them expressing some phase of the Opposition's frustration and indicating future strategy.

From Natal, the most English of the four provinces, comes the Federal Union Party. Its object is to reshape, within the Act of Union, the present quasi-unitary system to one of federation and so, Federalists say, protect the white minority and a

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large part of the non-European population. Many leaders of the movement come from the ranks of the Torch Commando, the militant servicemen's organization, once 150,000 strong, which worked with the United Party to defeat the Nationalists.

With the backing of the Opposition press, the federal plan has been derided by the United Party leader, J. G. N. Strauss, as a "constitutional monstrosity." However, it provides an alternative to the Nationalists' Broederbond Republic and may act as a brake on Nationalist extremists.

Its appeal is to those who, like its instigator, Senator Heaton Nicholls, feel that "union has completely failed" and that the English-speaking people "are to be driven out of South Africa." So thoughtful a recruit as Arthur Keppel-Jones, lecturer in history at Witwatersrand University and author of the prophetic *When Smuts Goes*, looks on it as a move to rescue a part of the Union from subjugation and emigration and to save the whites from being driven into the sea.

How far Natal, with its great Indian population and anti-Indian feeling, will go toward the party's principle of a "progressive rather than repressive non-European policy" probably will determine its strength. Initially, at least, it frightened the Nationalists into angry threats of economic reprisal.

The Minister of Economic Affairs, Eric Louw, warned Natal that the province, with its great seaport of Durban and its sugar industry and hydroelectric plants, could hardly expect its usual share of foreign capital and foreign currency because, he claimed, its political attitude "greatly harmed South Africa's credit in the United States." Nationalist opponents wonder why the espousal of federation is less legitimate than espousal of a republic.

#### **Margaret Ballinger and the Liberals**

A Liberal Party also has, at last, been organized, which will give a home to the Union's many liberals and, at the very least, serve as an educational forum. Except for the defunct Communist Party, it is the only political party in the nation's history open throughout the country to Europeans and non-Europeans alike. Its policy is to return to the old Cape Colony policy of "equal rights for all civilized persons and opportunity for all to become civilized," as Margaret Ballinger, M.P. and president of the party, describes it.

In 1937 cool, blue-eyed Mrs. Ballinger left her post as lecturer in history at Witwatersrand University to campaign for representative among the natives in the eastern Cape Province, and she has been returned ever since. Her Scotch father was a burgher of the old Orange Free State who fought with the Boers, but no pro-Boer sympathy has blinded her to the just demands of others of whatever color.

In and out of Parliament she has championed non-Europeans, and when she rises to speak in the House of Assembly even the Nationalists, for the most part, listen respectfully. Now she presides over the Liberal Party, flanked by Alan Paton, author of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, and Afrikaner Leo Marquard, head of the Oxford University Press in South Africa.

The strongest Government-supporting newspaper, the *Transvaal*, describes these parties as "un-South African in essence" and concludes "they hate the Afrikaner Nationalist so much and are so powerless to overcome him with their own resources that they do not scruple to seek recruits for their fight among the non-European proletariat."

The Liberal Party, however, is patted on the back by the Opposition press, which sees in it a check on extremists. Almost with a sigh of relief, the party is welcomed by United Party supporters as evidence to which all whites can point to prove to non-Europeans that they have friends among Europeans.

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Although these new parties will weaken the official Opposition by contesting United Party seats in provincial and parliamentary elections, they will unite in fighting Nationalist racial and constitutional policies, so to that extent they are in opposition. At any rate, Opposition and Government supporters alike agree that they clear the air and provide expression for the hard thinking which the fight of the general election generated.

#### **Rift among the Nationalists**

In Nationalist ranks as well, there are signs of a rift. Here it centers on the pace at which they should move toward a republic. From the Prime Minister down, there is agreement on the goal of a republic but division on timing. Basically, it is an isolationist versus nonisolationist disagreement.

On his return from the Coronation, Prime Minister Malan stated that South Africa would remain within the Commonwealth because "in the present state of the world no people can follow a policy of isolation." At the same time, of course, he reaffirmed his Government's republican policy.

Yet on Coronation Day pro-republic protest meetings were held in several towns, and various Republican Leagues were formed. There were speeches in which the Governor-General was described as a symbol of "the Afrikaner's servitude," and the people were warned that "the hair of a Samson of his people (Prime Minister Malan) who is going to lay his head in the lap of a Delilah in a palace (Queen Elizabeth II) may be shorn."

During the Prime Minister's absence the Acting Prime Minister, J. G. Strydom, Minister of Lands and most uncompromising republican leader in the party, took occasion to state that the Nationalist Party is a republican party "in its soul and essence." For a time 79-year-old Dr. Malan can be counted on to hold his disciplined party in line. What might follow should Mr. Strydom succeed him as Prime Minister is the question South Africans are pondering.

Undoubtedly, responsible leaders see that the upshot of his disaffection on both sides could, if extremist irritates extremist, precipitate the creation of an Ulster and a republic. This danger should cause hotheads to walk warily.

However confusing, this splintering is healthy for the country, for at last it seems that South Africans are facing their problem, the English-speaking in particular. Since the Boer War the Afrikaner has been gathering strength to turn that defeat into victory, which he felt he grasped in the 1953 election. The Nationalist Party is the political expression of militant Afrikanerdom.

Now it is the turn of the English-speaking South African to mobilize his forces behind his democratic faiths, and in doing so he cannot escape the need to hammer out a race policy based on Western civilization's concept of the worth of the individual. Otherwise he must move into the Nationalist camp. So these new parties are evidence that he is beginning to see that his survival in South Africa is knit as closely to enlightened race policy as the Nationalist Afrikaner's is allied to white supremacy.

As in the American Civil War, South Africa's conflict is a constitutional one aggravated and enflamed by differences in racial attitude, although no one expects armed conflict, however often the dread words "civil war" have been bandied about in the past year. In the midst of 10 million non-Europeans both sides draw back from that abyss. Yet the issues remain comparable to those that caused the Civil War, and South Africans in both camps are preparing themselves for a long struggle to win through to the nationhood they never have achieved.

The ABC of the struggle is that if Afrikaner supremacy is not acceptable, white supremacy also must be rejected, for one presupposes the other. English-speaking South Africans and their many democratic Afrikaner friends are beginning to see this at last, and to consider what kind of country they wish to see fifty years, instead of a mere five years, from now.

The new parties express the new attitude, although they are only straws in the wind at the moment. But forty years ago the Afrikaner Bond was little more, and today its descendant is the Broederbond, which works underground for a National-Socialist republic and to which the Prime Minister and most of the Cabinet belong.